

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 00961 041522Z

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ACTION AF-06

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PDEV, WA, SF

SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: TURNHALLE CONFERENCE BEGINS THIRD SESSION

REF: PRETORIA 168 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: THIRD SITTING OF CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE
ON THE FUTURE OF NAMIBIA OPENED IN WINDHOEK'S TURNHALLE ON
MARCH 2. DELEGATES MET AFTER NEARLY FOUR MONTH HIATUS AMID
PRESS REPORTS OF "MINI-CONGRESSES", ULTIMATUMS, WALK-OUT
THREATS, AND AN APPARENTLY INCREASED SENSE OF URGENCY AMONG
SOME BLACK DELEGATIONS. THUS FAR LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE HAS
EMERGED FROM THE TURNHALLE, BUT SPECULATION IS RIFE THAT THAT
AT LEAST SOME FAR-REACHING PROPOSALS MAY BE APPROVED. END

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PAGE 02 PRETOR 00961 041522Z

SUMMARY.

2. SEVERAL PRESS ACCOUNTS INDICATE THAT THE SO-CALLED "SOUTHERN CAUCUS", CONSISTING OF A NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE BASTOR, COLORED, DAMARA, HERERO AND NAMA DELEGATIONS, HELD A "MINI-CONGRESS" THE DAY BEFORE THE TALKS BEGAN. THIS GROUP APPARENTLY AGREED ON A SIX POINT PLAN WHICH, INTER ALIA, CALLS FOR THE IMMEDIATE ELIMINATION OF ALL DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION, WOULD ADMIT POLITICAL PARTIES (INCLUDING SWAPO) TO THE CONFERENCE, SUGGESTS THAT THERE SHOULD BE SOME KIND OF INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION AT THE TALKS, AND ASKS FOR SOME FORM OF INTERIM MULTI-RACIAL GOVERNMENT WITHIN FIVE MONTHS TIME. PLAN REPORTEDLY HAS ALREADY BEEN SUBMITTED TO FULL CONFERENCE, BUT DIRK MUDGE TOLD PRESS MARCH 3 THAT HE WAS "UNAWARE" OF ANY SUCH MOVE OR ULTIMATUMS.

3. HERERO LEADER CHIEF CLEMENS KAPUUNO IS EXPECTED TO ASK THE CONFERENCE TO CONSIDER THE CONSTITUTION PREPARED BY AMERICAN LAWYER STEWART SCHWARTZ. AFTER HIS RETURN FROM US TWO WEEKS AGO, KAPUUNO TOLD EMBOFF IN WINDHOEK THAT HE WAS CIRCULATING DRAFT TO KEY MEMBERS OF "MOST" DELEGATIONS, AND INTENDED TO SUBMIT THE DOCUMENT TO THE FULL CONFERENCE DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF DISCUSSIONS. KAPUUNO'S CONSTITUTION HAS APPARENTLY RUN INTO SOME FLAK FROM DELEGATES WHO FEEL CONFERENCE SHOULD WRITE ITS OWN CONSTITUTION FROM SCRATCH. KAPUUNO IS ALSO HAVING TROUBLE GETTING CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE TO ACCEPT RETURN EXILE V.M. MBAEVA AS MEMBER OF HERERO DELEGATION.

4. UNCONFIRMED REPORTS ARE ALSO CIRCULATING THAT DAMARA DELEGATION PLANS TO INTRODUCE SHORTLY THEIR OWN PROPOSALS, FIRST OUTLINED IN EARLY JANUARY (PARA 2 REFTTEL), WHICH ARE NOT DISSIMILAR TO THOSE REPORTEDLY AGREED UPON BY "SOUTHERN CAUCUS". RELIABLE EMBASSY CONTACT IN WINDHOEK SAYS CHANGE IN ATTITUDE OF DAMARA DELEGATION SINCE NOVEMBER SESSION AT TURNHALLE IS "REMARKABLE", AND THAT THEY APPARENTLY ARE TAKING A VERY HARD LINE, INCLUDING A WALKOUT THREAT OR CONSIDERATION OF A CALL FOR A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE IN THE CONFERENCE'S PROCEEDINGS IF SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS DO NOT COME QUICKLY.

5. THE FORMAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE THUS FAR HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 PRETOR 00961 041522Z

COMMITTEE CHARGED WITH INVESTIGATING SOCIAL CONDITIONS. THE FULL ASSEMBLY APPROVED A RECOMMENDATION THAT A SYSTEM OF EQUAL PENSIONS FOR ALL EMPLOYEES BE INSTITUTED. THE ASSEMBLY IS STILL CONSIDERING A PROPOSAL THAT ALL CITIZENS CARRY A UNIFORM IDENTITY DOCUMENT AS A MEANS OF MITIGATING THE PASS SYSTEM.

6. COMMENT: WHETHER OR NOT SOME BLACK DELEGATES ACTUALLY

PUSH THINGS AS FAR AS PRESS REPORTS SPECULATE, THE IMPRESSION REMAINS THAT EVEN THE MOST MODERATE AMONG THEM ARE BEGINNING TO DEMAND SOMETHING SUBSTANTIAL TO SHOW FOR THEIR EFFORTS. THE EVENTS TO THE NORTH HAVE APPARENTLY MADE A SERIOUS IMPRINT ON MOST DELEGATES AND HAVE RESULTED IN AN INCREASED SENSE OF URGENCY AMONG MANY. DR. B. J. AFRICA, LEADER OF THE BASTER DELEGATION, ALTHOUGH SOMETIMES LABELED AS A "STOOGE" BY MORE MILITANT NAMIBIANS, HAS PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY SAID THAT EVENTS ARE FORCING THINGS TO MOVE MUCH FASTER AND THAT IT IS NOW IMPORTANT TO SHOW RESULTS QUICKLY. IN A SIMILAR VEIN, MODERATE COLORED LEADER A.J.F. KLOPPERS SAYS THAT CONCRETE RESULTS ARE NEEDED TO DEMONSTRATE THE INTEGRITY OF THE TALKS AND THAT THE CONFERENCE MUST MOVE "AT A FAR FASTER PACE". THIS SESSION OF THE TALKS SHOULD INDICATE WHETHER OR NOT THE PACE INDEED WILL BE QUICKENED AND IN WHAT DIRECTION THE DELEGATES CHOOSE TO GO. THE SOUTHERN CAUCUS PROPOSALS MAY VERY WELL BRING THINGS TO A HEAD.
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